How Do I Repent

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All praise is due to Allaah the Forgiver of sins, Accepter of repentance, Severe in punishment, Opener of the gates of acceptance to those who seek forgiveness and the Facilitator of means for those who repent. May Allaah send salutations and exalt the mention of Prophet Muhammad, who was sent as a mercy to all mankind, his family and companions.

Beloved brother! Most people do not know the virtue of repentance or its reality in order for them to appreciate repentance and actually repent; and when they do know its rank and virtue, they would not know the way leading to it; and if they find out the way to it, they would not know how to start.

Beloved brother! Come with me and let us find out the reality of repentance and the way leading to it, perhaps we can reach it.

We all make mistakes

Beloved brother! We all sin, we all make mistakes. We strive to Allaah sometimes, and we shy away at other times; we are mindful of Allaah at times, and we become heedless other times. We are

never sin-free, and we do make mistakes; we are not infallible, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"All the sons of Aadam make mistakes; but the best of those who make mistakes are those who frequently repent."*** *(Tirmidhi)*

Being heedless and having shortcomings is a part of human nature, but it is from the mercy of Allaah that He opened the gate of repentance for mankind, and commanded us to turn towards Him with obedience whenever we are overwhelm with sins. Were it not for this, mankind would have been in a serious situation, and we would have been unable to draw close to Allaah and would have lost hope in repentance and forgiveness.

Where is the path to salvation?

You might say to me that you are seeking happiness and salvation and are hoping to be forgiven, but you do not know the way leading to it nor where to start. You are like a drowning person who wants someone to take his hand and rescue him, like a person who lost his way, who awaits aid. You need to see the light of hope, but where is the way leading to happiness and salvation?

Beloved brother! The way is clear and obvious; there is only one way, which is the way of repentance; that is the way towards salvation and success; it is a facilitated way, and it is open every second. All you have to do is approach it, and you will find the response, as Allaah says what means, ***"And verily, I am indeed forgiving to him who repents, believes (in My Oneness, and associates none in worship with Me) and does righteous good deeds, and then remains constant in doing them (till his death)."*** *(Taa Haa:82)* Allaah called upon all His slaves, both believers and disbelievers, to repent, and He informed that He forgives all sins for those who repent, regardless of the extent and greatness of these sins. Allaah says what means, ***"Say: 'O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allaah, verily, Allaah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.' "*** *(Az-Zumar:53)*

What is repentance?

Repentance turning from all that Allaah hates inwardly and outwardly, to all that Allaah loves

inwardly and outwardly. It is the highest of all ranks; it is the shunning of sins due to the fear of Allaah and realizing the ugliness of sins. It is feeling remorse of sins, and determining not to commit it again; it is to return to Allaah in what is remaining in his life.

Why should you repent?

Beloved brother! You should repent because repentance is:

- A form of obedience to your Lord, for He has commanded to do so. Allaah says what means, ***"O you who believe! Turn to Allaah with sincere repentance."*** *(At-Tahreem:8)*
- A reason for your success in this life and the Hereafter. Allaah says what means, ***"And all of you beg Allaah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful."*** *(An-Noor:31)*
- A reason for gaining the love of Allaah. Allaah says what means, ***"Truly, Allaah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves."*** *(Al-Baqarah:222)* There is no happiness more than that which occurs by knowing that your Lord loves you when repent.

- A reason for entering Paradise and being saved from Hell. Allaah says what means, ***"Then, there succeeded them those who gave up As-Salaat (the prayers) [i.e. made their Salaat (prayers) to be lost, either by not offering them or by not offering them perfectly or by not offering them in their proper fixed times] and have followed lusts. So, they will be thrown in Hell. Except those who repent and believe (in the Oneness of Allaah and His Messenger Muhammad), and work righteousness. Such will enter Paradise and they will not be wronged in the least."*** *(Maryam:59-60)* Is there any other objective one would seek to achieve better than entering Paradise?
- A reason for receiving rain, increase of strength and gaining children and wealth. Allaah says what means, ***" 'And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him, He will send you (from the sky) abundant rain, and add strength to your strength, so do not turn away as criminals or disbelievers in the Oneness of Allaah' "*** *(Hood:25)* He also said, ***"I said (to them): "Ask forgiveness from***

your Lord, verily, He is Oft-Forgiving; He will send rain to you in abundance, And give you increase in wealth and children, and bestow on you gardens and bestow on you rivers.” *(Nooh:10-12)*

- A reason for forgiving sins and replacing them into reward. Allaah says what means, ***“Except those who repent and believe (in Islaamic Monotheism), and do righteous deeds; for those, Allaah will change their sins into good deeds, and Allaah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”*** *(Al-Furqaan:70)*

Beloved brother! Don’t you think that these virtues as well as many others which we did not mention are worth repenting for? Why are you stingy with yourself in an issue which results in your happiness? Why do you oppress yourself and deprive yourself from gaining the pleasure and acceptance of Allaah?

How do I repent?

Beloved brother! I feel you want to say, “I want to return to my Lord; I want to repent; I realize that

happiness is not in following my desires and lusts or committing sins." On the other hand, I feel you might not know the way to repentance, or how to start.

Allow me to tell you that when Allaah wills good for one of His slaves, He facilitates for him the means that would help achieve it The following are some things which would help you to repent.

- Being sincere in your intention and truthful in your repentance, for Allaah would then help you and keep away from you obstacles which might hinder you from repenting. Allaah says what means, ***"Thus it was, that We might turn away from him evil and illegal sexual intercourse. Surely, he was one of Our chosen (guided) slaves."*** *(Yoosuf:24)*
- Holding yourself accountable for what you do, for self-reproach encourages you to do good, helps you refrain from evil and helps you make up for what has passed.
- Reminding yourself, admonishing your soul, terrifying it from the punishment, and saying to it, "Repent before you die for death comes

suddenly," reminding yourself with the death of acquaintances, and remembering that you will meet death regardless what you do. The grave will be your abode, dust will be your mattress, and worms will be your company. Don't you fear that the angel of death would come to you while you are committing a sin? Will regret do you any good then? Will crying and sorrow be of any benefit?

- Keeping yourself away from the places of sinning, for staying away from the places in which you used to commit sins helps you repent.
- Staying away from bad company, because you will be affected by their habits, and know that they will not leave you alone, for Satan is after them to lead them, and perhaps push them to do evil. Change your telephone number, your residence if possible, and the roads you use to frequently travel upon.
- Remembering the evil consequence of sinning, because this will help you shun sins initially, and then repent from them.
- Showing your self Paradise, by reminding it with the greatness of Paradise and what Allaah Has in it for the pious who feared; reminding yourself

with Hell and what Allaah Has prepared in it for those who disobey Him.

- Keeping yourself busy with what benefits you and avoiding sitting free, for if you do not keep yourself busy with what is virtuous, it will lead you to become busy doing what is evil. An addition to that, idle leads to seeking company even if they were evil.
- Going against your desires, for desires are the most dangerous thing, and that is why Allaah says what means, ***"Have you (O Muhammad ﷺ) seen him who has taken as his ilaah (god) his own vain desire."*** *(Al-Furqaan:43)*

What are the conditions for a sincere repentance?

1. ***Sincerity to Allaah:*** The reason behind repentance should be the love of Allaah, glorifying Him, hoping for His reward and forgiveness, fear from His punishment; repentance should not be for the sake of coming close to a person and seeking a worldly gain behind it. Allaah says what means, ***"Except those who repent (from hypocrisy), do righteous***

good deeds, hold fast to Allaah, and purify their religion for Allaah (by worshipping none but Allaah, and do good for Allaah's sake only, not to show off), then they will be with the believers.” *(An-Nisaa’:146)*

2. ***Refrain from sinning:*** Repentance will not be true and accepted if a person continues to commit sins while in the process of repentance. On the other hand, committing the same sin after sincere repentance would not void the first repentance, but he will need to repent again.
3. ***Admitting to the sin:*** No one can repent from something he does not consider as a sin.
4. ***Regretting the sins:*** Repentance is sincere when a person regrets it and feels sorrow because of it; and it would not be accepted from the one who brags about his sins, and that is why the Prophet (ﷺ), said, ***“Regretting is repenting.”*** *(Ahmad & ibn Maajah)*
5. ***Determination not to return to the sin again:*** Repentance would not be accepted from someone who intends to return to the same sin after his repentance; rather he should intend never to commit the sin again in the future.

6. ***Returning people's rights to them:*** If the sin was related to other people's rights, then one must return these rights to those whom he took them from if he wants his repentance to be correct and accepted. The Prophet (ﷺ), said ***"He who took someone's rights, then let him free himself from it today before the day will come when no benefit will be from gold and silver. If the person has rewards it will be taken from his rewards as much as what he oppressed and took from others, and if he has no rewards, then their sins will be added to him."*** *(Bukhaari)*
7. ***Repenting during the time when it is accepted:*** Repentance is accepted before the moment of death and before the sun rises from the west. The Prophet (ﷺ), said, ***"Allaah spreads His Hand during the night*** *(in a way which befits His Majesty)* ***so that the sinners of the day would repent, and spreads His Hand during the day, so that the sinners of the night would repent, until the sun rises from the west."*** *(Muslim)* and he (ﷺ), also said, ***"No repentance is accepted at the moment of death."*** *(Ahmad & Tirmidhi)*

What are the signs for the acceptance of repentance?

- Becoming better than the condition you were in before repentance.
- Continuously fearing retuning to the same sin, for no one should feel safe while he does not know what Allaah Has decreed for him; fear should accompany you until you hear the angels say, as Allaah says what means, ***"Fear not, nor grieve! But receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised."*** *(Fussilat:30)* Only then fear and worry would disappear.
- Feeling the greatness of what he committed, even if he has already repented. *Ibn Mas'ood* (رضي الله عنه) said, *"As a result of his sin, a believer feels as though he is sitting under a mountain which he fears will fall on his head. On the other hand, a sinner feels that his sins are just like a fly which landed on his nose and that he can simply drive it away by a simple move of his hand."*
- Feeling humbleness and humility in your heart with your Lord; there is nothing dearer to Allaah than seeing His slave humbling and humiliating himself with Him, regretting and repenting,

continuously mentioning Allaah.

- Being aware of the actions of the limbs. You should guard your tongue from lying, backbiting, and tale-carrying, you should keep yourself busy with remembering and mentioning Allaah and reciting the Qur'aan. You should guard your stomach from eating ill-gotten provision. You should guard your sight and not to look at prohibited things. You should guard your hearing and not to listen to music, lying or backbiting. You he should guard your hands and legs and not to use them in anything prohibited. You should guard your heart and not envy or hate anyone. You should guard your obedience and make it sincere and stay away from show off.

Beware of delaying

Beloved brother! No one knows when he will die or how much is left from his time; it is sad to see some people delaying repentance saying, it is not time for it yet, let us enjoy our lives and when we become old we will repent. This is from Satan and following the desires of this vanishing life. Satan promises man while he has no power to grant man

anything. Therefore, you should rush immediately to repentance, and beware of heedlessness, delaying, and feeling that you still have a long life to live.

Beloved brother! Rush to repentance and beware of delaying repentance, because delaying, itself, is a sin that needs repentance. Immediate repentance from sins is mandatory, so repent before death; repent before the time will come and regret will not benefit you. You do not know when your time will finish. Repent before the darkness overwhelms your heart and sins become a habit. Repent before you become sick and then die without getting the chance to repent.

Do not be deceived by the favours of Allaah

Beloved brother! Some people excessively sin and disobey, and when you try to talk to them about repentance they say, there are many people who openly disobey Allaah day and night and their sins filled the globe, yet they are very rich and the favours upon them are abundant. Those who say such words forget that Allaah grants these worldly

gains to Whom He loves and Whom He does not love, and that this could be a way of gradually punishing them, and that He delays them, but when He does punish them it is severe. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"If you see that Allaah Has bestowed favours upon someone although he is sinning, then know that it is a way of gradually punishing him." He (ﷺ) then recited the verse in which Allaah says what means, 'So, when they forgot (the warning) with which they had been reminded, We opened for them the gates of every (pleasant) thing, until in the midst of their enjoyment in that which they were given, all of a sudden, We took them (in punishment), and lo! They were plunged into destruction with deep regrets and sorrows. So the root of the people who did wrong was cut off. And all the praises and thanks are to Allaah, the Lord of the 'Aalameen (mankind, jinn, and all that exists).' "*** *(Al-An'aam:44-45) (Ahmad)*